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Application No.: 10/714,065

Docket No.: SIW-069

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**1. (Original) A fuel cell system comprising:**

- a fuel cell for generating power by being supplied with a fuel gas and an oxidizing gas;
- a fuel gas supply path for supplying a fuel gas to the fuel cell;
- a fuel off-gas circulation path for returning a fuel off-gas discharged from the fuel cell to the fuel gas supply path;
- an ejector, provided in the fuel gas supply path and driven by fluid flow energy, for supplying the fuel off-gas in the fuel off-gas circulation path flow to the fuel gas supply path;
- a fuel pump, provided in the fuel off-gas circulation path or on the fuel gas supply path and downstream with respect to the ejector, and driven by a rotating machine, for pressurizing the fuel off-gas;
- a discharge valve for discharging the fuel off-gas from the fuel off-gas circulation path;
- and
- a control device operatively connected to the fuel pump and to the discharge valve.

2. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a voltage measuring device, connected to the control device, for measuring voltage of cells constituting the fuel cell,

wherein the control device ~~is adapted to control~~ the discharge valve so as to be opened and closed depending on the voltage of the cells measured by the voltage measuring device.

3. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a state-of-load measuring device, connected to the control device, for measuring a state-of-load of the fuel pump,

wherein the control device ~~is adapted to control~~ the discharge valve so as to be opened and closed depending on the state-of-load measured by the state-of-load measuring device.

4. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system according to claim 2, further comprising a state-of-load measuring device, connected to the control device, for measuring a state-of-load of the fuel pump,

Application No.: 10/714,065

Docket No.: SIW-069

wherein the control device ~~is adapted to control~~ the discharge valve so as to be opened and closed depending on the state-of-load measured by the state-of-load measuring device.

5. (Withdrawn) A method for operating a fuel cell system which comprises: a fuel cell for generating power by being supplied with a fuel gas and an oxidizing gas; a fuel gas supply path for supplying a fuel gas to the fuel cell; a fuel off-gas circulation path for returning a fuel off-gas discharged from the fuel cell to the fuel gas supply path; an ejector, provided in the fuel gas supply path and driven by fluid flow energy, for supplying the fuel off-gas in the fuel off-gas circulation path flow to the fuel gas supply path; a fuel pump, provided in the fuel off-gas circulation path or on the fuel gas supply path and downstream with respect to the ejector, and driven by a rotating machine, for pressurizing the fuel off-gas; a discharge valve for discharging the fuel off-gas from the fuel off-gas circulation path; and a control device operatively connected to the fuel pump and to the discharge valve, the method comprising the steps of:

closing the discharge valve upon starting of the fuel cell; and
operating the fuel pump when the discharge valve is in a closed state.

6. (Withdrawn) A method for operating a fuel cell system according to claim 5,
wherein the fuel cell system further comprises a voltage measuring device for measuring voltage of cells constituting the fuel cell, and
wherein the method further comprises the steps of:
opening the discharge valve when the voltage of the cells measured by the voltage measuring device is lower than or equal to a predetermined value when a predetermined time has passed since the fuel cell is started; and
closing the discharge valve when the voltage of the cells exceeds the predetermined value after the discharge valve is opened.

7. (Withdrawn) A method for operating a fuel cell system according to claim 5,
wherein the fuel cell system further comprises a nitrogen concentration measuring device for measuring concentration of nitrogen contained in the fuel off-gas, and a voltage measuring device for measuring voltage of cells constituting the fuel cell, and
wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

Application No.: 10/714,065

Docket No.: STW-069

opening the discharge valve when the concentration of nitrogen measured by the nitrogen concentration measuring device is greater than or equal to a predetermined value when a predetermined time has passed since the fuel cell is started; and

closing the discharge valve when the voltage of the cells exceeds a predetermined value after the discharge valve is opened.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for operating a fuel cell system according to claim 7, wherein the nitrogen concentration measuring device comprises a state-of-load measuring device for measuring a state-of-load of the fuel pump.

9. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system according to claim 1, wherein the control device ~~is adapted to close~~ the discharge valve and ~~to operate~~ the fuel pump upon starting of the fuel cell.